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SAMURAI SWORDS™ (SHOGUN)

BRIEF RULES SUMMARY WITH UNOFFICIAL CLARIFICATIONS AND SOME ALTERNATE RULES

- Each player represents a 16th century Japanese Warlord commanding three generals, or daimyos. Warlords do not fight directly; they battle through the armies of their daimyos and their provincial forces. The goal of a Warlord is to become the Shogun of all Japan by controlling a certain number of the 68 provinces. A Warlord is eliminated from play by eliminating his three daimyos.

Military Units

For fairness, all players must have the same number of plastic figures available to them, i.e., 36 spearmen, and so forth, as these are a limited resource. Keep in mind that each plastic figure, or military unit, represents a large number of 16th century Japanese fighting men. These men can be broadly classed as either Samurai (noble warriors), Ashigaru (fighting peasants), or Ronin (masterless Samurai Swordsmen who act as mercenaries for hire). There is also a Ninja. Every regular unit must either be part of an **army** (i.e., placed on an army card) or a **provincial force** (i.e., placed directly in a province). The limit of samurai and ashigaru in an army is indicated by the "S" and "A" blocks on the army cards-- the daimyo and four samurai, plus ten ashigaru, is the maximum amount of regular units in an army. *The maximum amount of regular units in a provincial force is five.* Note that ronin do not count as regular units, nor do the army markers, nor do bonus defensive units assigned to a castle or fortress. *Note also that only one army can occupy any one province at a time.*

SAMURAI

Daimyos: A daimyo is the general of an army, and as such is always placed on the army card. A daimyo represents both the actual commander and his elite cavalry units. Each Warlord can never have more than three daimyo. A daimyo fights in hand-to-hand combat and scores a kill on a 6 or less. New daimyos cannot be levied (**but see optional rules below**). Each daimyo has a pegged experience marker to mark experience points on the army card, with a matching army marker to show the position of the army on the game board. Daimyos gain experience by fighting successful battles and thus gain more movement and attack capabilities.

Bowmen: One bowman is initially placed in each army. Samurai bowmen strike during the ranged-weapon phase of combat, and score a kill on a 6 or less. Hand-to-hand combat units that are killed by ranged weapons do not get a chance to return fire, making bowmen very powerful. They cost 1 koku to levy.

Swordsmen: One samurai swordsman is initially placed in each army. Swordsmen strike during the hand-to-hand combat phase and score a kill on a five or less. They cost one-half of a koku to levy (you can buy either two swordsmen or one swordsman and one gunner with your one koku).

RONIN

Ronin: Ronin are essentially samurai swordsmen that can be hired as mercenaries for one round at a time. There must always be at least one more regular unit in the army or province where the ronin will be placed than the number of ronin you intend to place there. Placement of ronin is done in secret; the ronin are placed on top of the corresponding face-down province card. Ronin strike during the hand-to-hand combat phase and score a kill on a five or less. They cost two per 1 koku to hire, and a minimum of two must be hired if you chose to hire any.

ASHIGARU

Gunners: Gunners are peasant warriors who fight with a primitive firearm called the arquebus. Two gunners are initially placed in each army. gunners strike during the ranged-weapon phase of combat, and score a kill on a 4 or less. Remember, hand-to-hand combat units that are killed by ranged weapons do not get a chance to return fire. Gunners cost one-half of a koku to levy (you can buy either two gunners or one gunner and one swordsman with your one koku).

Spearmen: One peasant spearman is initially placed in each province controlled by a warlord, making up the beginning provincial forces. Spearmen strike during the hand-to-hand combat phase and score a kill on a four or less. They cost 3 per one koku to levy.

NINJA

There is a special black figure representing the ninja. The ninja may be hired for one round of play by being the highest bidder. The ninja may perform one of two services: either to attempt the assassination of an opponent's daimyo on the current round of play (on a roll of 8 or less); or to spy on an opponent's plans at the beginning of the next round of play (automatic). If the ninja fails in an assassination attempt, your opponent gets a free attempt to use the ninja to assassinate one of your daimyos (success on a 9 or **higher**).

Set-up

Shuffle the 68 province cards and deal them one at a time to each player. For five players, each player starts with 13 provinces with 3 provinces empty. For four players, each player starts with 17 provinces with no provinces empty. For three players, each player starts with 22 provinces with two provinces empty. For two players, each player controls two separate colours, so treat as a four-player game in set-up. Any empty province is "up for grabs" to the first player to move in. Cards for empty provinces are placed on the red rectangle on the game board.

Every turn, each player gets one koku for each three provinces controlled, dropping remainders and with a **minimum of three koku**. Thus, five players start with 4 koku each, four get 5, three get 7, and two get 5 for each colour (and must keep them separate). All koku must be allocated during the planning stage; they cannot be saved or loaned.

The official ways to win depend on whether you're playing a long game, a short game, a "quick-start" game, or a two-player game. We suggest you adopt these alternate rules to standardise the winning criterion: **A player must control a certain number of provinces at the end of a complete round of play in order to be declared Shogun. For five players, the number is 30 provinces. For four, 35. For three, 40. And for two, 50 provinces for the two colours combined.**

Set up the three armies as described above, and put one spearman on each controlled province. Draw swords to determine order to place the other spearmen and army markers. Now take 12 spearman and place them, by pairs, in any owned provinces, in order of swords drawn. Note that during this stage only you may not have more than three spearmen in any one province! Finally, place the three army markers, one at a time, in owned provinces in order of swords drawn.

Action Sequence

Each of the nine actions in the Action Sequence making up a round of play is performed *simultaneously* by all players, except for Action 7: Wage War. Wage War is composed of 4 phases; all 4 phases are performed by one player at a time, in the turn order established during Action 6: Take Swords. Note: **since everyone reveals their koku allocation at the end of Action 1 and the first thing everyone looks at is who hired the Ninja, we suggest you adopt this alternate rule to switch Actions 2 and 6, since taking swords affects nothing until Action 7 (unless you count who gets to buy a castle, a fortification base, or hire ronin when the master tray is low on those pieces; in that rare case, simply wait until Action 6 to resolve the conflict).**

ACTION 1: PLAN

Secretly allocate all koku to any or all of the five planning bins. Players then simultaneously reveal their plans to each other. Note: if you hired the ninja during the previous round and didn't use him as an assassin, you can use him during this action to spy on one player's koku allocation *before* you allocate your own koku. Chosen player shows you his allocation (and cannot change it), you then allocate your koku, and then all players (including you) simultaneously reveal their plans to each other.

ACTION 2: HIRE NINJA

Players compare the koku in their HIRE NINJA bins. The player with the most koku buys one of the two services of the ninja as described above for that round of play. In case of a tie for the most koku, no one hires the ninja! Place the ninja figure in front of the Warlord who hired him until he is used. If you hire the ninja, you don't need to decide right away which service (if any) you'll use him for; you may hire him only to prevent another player from hiring him. Don't reveal the ninja's mission until you're ready to use him!

Special First Round Rule: **Daimyo assassination attempts are not permitted on the first round of play.** If you hire the ninja on the first round of play, you can only use him as a spy during Action 1 of the second round.

The ninja assassin can announce one strike on any opponent's daimyo at any point during Action 7 on the current round of play. Assassination attempts are resolved as described above. If a daimyo is assassinated, turn the assassinated daimyo unit on its side on your army card. Then turn the matching army marker on its side in the game board province.

The assassinated daimyo cannot move, attack or defend for the rest of the current round. During that time, its army is "disrupted": they cannot move or attack; but when attacked, they must defend. At the end of the current round, if at least one unit of the assassinated daimyo's army survived combat; appoint the daimyo's successor by *removing a unit from the army* and returning the assassinated daimyo and his army marker to their standing positions. Return the experience marker to the beginning level of experience. **Alternate rule: the unit promoted to be the new daimyo must be a samurai swordsman or bowman, in that order of preference, never an ashigaru. If only ashigaru remain, the army is disbanded and the ashigaru are added to the provincial force if room exists; excess ashigaru are lost.**

If the daimyo's entire army is eliminated in battle, the daimyo is out of the game. This is true whether or not the daimyo was assassinated by the ninja, or was removed as the last casualty of battle (the daimyo must always be chosen as the last to be killed). If a Warlord loses his last daimyo, he is out of the game.

If you don't use the ninja as an assassin, you may use him as a spy on the next round of play as described above

ACTION 3: BUILD

Players who allocated 2 koku to their BUILD bins buy and place either 1 castle or 1 fortification base. A player can build only one castle (or upgrade one castle to a fortress by adding a fortification base) per round of play, so either zero or two 2 koku may be allocated to build. Castles may be placed in any owned province, one to a province. A castle adds four temporary spearmen in defence of a province when attacked; a fortress add five temporary ronin. It does not matter if the player actually has enough extra plastic units to represent them; anything may be used for that purpose. These temporary defensive units must be chosen as the first casualties before any regular units are hit. Any killed defensive spearmen or ronin are fully replenished upon attack by a different player, or at the start of the next round. These defensive units never strike during a naval first strike defence, and never can be used to attack. They do not count as regular units for figuring maximum provincial force size or number of ronin. If there are not enough castles or fortresses to go around, they are purchased in order of swords drawn. Players unable to build lose their two koku. Castles and fortresses may be captured, but can never be destroyed or moved. **See also the optional Seat of Power rules below.**

ACTION 4: LEVY UNITS

Players who allocated koku to their LEVY UNITS bins buy and place reinforcement units from their planning trays, at the costs and limits set forth above. You can place **only one levied unit per province**, and *placing the unit in an army counts as placing it in the province the army is in!* Therefore, you can never levy more units than the number of provinces you own. If you run out of a particular unit in your planning tray, you may not levy more of that unit until some are returned to the tray as casualties.

ACTION 5: HIRE RONIN

Players who allocated koku to their HIRE RONIN bins buy ronin units, then secretly deploy them as described above. Until they attack, defend or move, the exact ronin locations remain a secret from opponents. You may split up hired ronin in any proportion to one or more provinces; you may decide the ronin will join the army or the provincial force. **Option: To clarify exactly where ronin will appear while maximising surprise, have the player write the name of the provinces, the number of ronin, and whether the ronin are part of the army or the provincial force on a scrap of paper and place all hired ronin atop the paper.** Remember that **ronin units cannot move or fight by themselves**; they must be accompanied by the army or the provincial force they joined. When choosing casualties, you must always be sure there is still at least one more regular unit in an army and/or provincial force than the number of ronin present. In the unlikely event that there aren't enough ronin in the master tray for all players who need them, players hire ronin in the turn order indicated by their swords. Any players who aren't able to hire ronin lose their koku to the master tray.

ACTION 6: TAKE SWORDS

Swords are drawn randomly from a closed fist to determine turn order in Action 7. Players compare the koku in their TAKE SWORDS bins. Players who placed koku take the swords of their **choice** in order of most koku allocated; players who didn't, draw remaining swords at random. In the case of a tie for koku allocated, and if tied players want the same sword, tying players alone must draw randomly from their first and second choices.

ACTION 7: WAGE WAR

In the turn order indicated by his sword, each player completes the entire 4-phase Wage War action, from A to D. There are three critical concepts/terms involved in various phases of the Wage War action: ownership of provinces, garrisons and daimyo experience. All are explained briefly here:

Ownership of Provinces

Provinces are adjacent if they share a common border; provinces which meet at a point are not considered to be adjacent. A **friendly province** contains at least one of your military units. You own the province; you hold the corresponding province card. An **enemy province** contains at least one military unit of an opponent. This opponent owns the province; he holds the corresponding province card. An **empty province** is unowned and contains no military units because no player has moved in to take it. The province cards for these provinces should be placed in the red rectangle on the game board.

Garrisons

You *cannot* leave a province empty when you move out; you must leave at least one *regular unit* behind as you move. Units left behind for this purpose are provincial forces called **garrisons**.

Daimyo Experience

This represents the knowledge and status a daimyo achieves with success in battle. Success in battle is only considered an **attack** (not defence) by that daimyo's army that **leaves an enemy province empty** by destroying the occupying enemy forces. A daimyo's experience is charted on your army card by its matching experience marker. A daimyo is considered an **experienced daimyo** when its experience marker is at the "2" or beyond. At the end of Action 7, Phase C, if at least one battle a daimyo fought was successful, move the matching daimyo experience marker one hole to the right. (If that army fought more than one successful battle, the marker still moves only one hole per round.) A daimyo whose experience marker is moved up to the next level (e.g., from 2 to 3) cannot attack again on this round; but its movement capability is increased in Phase D: Final Movement of this round.

A. Move Daimyos' Armies

The player waging war can move one or more of his armies from *friendly* provinces to adjacent *friendly* provinces. An army may move up to a number of adjacent friendly provinces in this phase equal to the daimyo's experience level.

Remember that the army may have to break off some units to become garrisons in provinces it moves through so as to not leave the province empty, as provincial forces *cannot* move in this phase. You cannot split off army units *for any other reason* in this phase.

In addition to breaking off units to become garrisons, an army can also pick up units of provincial forces in provinces it moves through, and add those units to the appropriate squares on the army card.

Note that an army may *pass through* a province occupied by another one of your armies. Or it can move into and remain in an army-occupied province, as long as the other occupying army is, in turn, moved out. When moving two armies this way, *never exchange units between them*.

B. Declare First Battles

The player waging war must declare which adjacent enemy provinces he plans to attack by laying down battle markers pointing from the attacking province. Battle markers are removed during Phase D: Final Movement. (Alternate rule: "attacks" on empty provinces do not have to be declared, they are simply occupied during Phase D. **Exception:** if moving through an empty province is the first move of an experienced daimyo during Phase C, that "attack" must be declared as a first battle.) The second and subsequent battles of experienced daimyo are not declared.

Special First Round Rule: You **cannot declare a battle against an enemy province occupied by an army during the first round** of the game.

A double-troop province is a province occupied by one army and one provincial force. If you declare a battle from a double-troop province, you can attack with either troop, or with both. If both troops attack, they can attack separate adjacent provinces, or attack the same province. If they both attack the same province, the two *battles are waged separately*. When placing battle markers, the attacking player must state what troop is attacking where.

You may declare multiple battles against the same enemy province from two or more troops. These *battles must be fought separately*. **All declared battles must be followed-through on if the enemy remains; they may not be called off before they are begun.**

C. Conduct Combat

The attacker conducts combat one battle at a time. All units in the attacking army or provincial force must take part in the battle. The defender always defends with *all* units in the defending province.

Rule clarification: Armies with multiple-attacks must resolve all their attacks before moving on to the next battle. Beyond this, the battles are handled in whatever order the attacker wishes.

Movement into/through one or more adjacent empty provinces is permitted during this phase by an experienced daimyo's army (these counts as attacks, but not as battles for experience purpose).

Movement into any adjacent empty province is permitted during Phase D, Final Movement, by any army or provincial force unit or units.

Combat is resolved by die-rolling: one die roll for each battling unit. Attacker and defender roll for each unit type simultaneously. Consult the Combat Sequence Chart.

Important points: Remember to remove casualties of ranged weapons before conducting hand-to-hand combat. Each player who suffered casualties *chooses* which of his own units to remove. The player who scored the hit(s) never removes his opponent's casualties. Players must choose casualties from units involved in the battle only. They can choose units which have already rolled, or units which haven't rolled yet. Any player battling with an army must choose the daimyo as the last casualty to be removed (**and choose ashigaru before samurai, if using the promote-a-samurai option**). In a defending province occupied by a castle or fortress, remove bonus units as casualties first. Also remember to keep more regular units than ronin after removing any casualties (the ronin defenders in a fortress do not count as actual ronin for this case).

All battles declared must be begun. The attacker may call off the battle only at the end of any complete combat sequence. (After calling off a battle, an experienced daimyo's army may be able to attack again in another location.) Otherwise, a battle ends when all defending units are eliminated or all attacking units are eliminated. This will leave the defending or attacking province empty for the moment, so the corresponding province card must be placed in the red rectangle on the board.

Eliminating An Opponent From The Game: see alternate rules below.

Defending in a Naval Invasion

Provinces connected by sea lines are considered to be adjacent. An attack across a sea line is called a naval invasion. When a province you own is attacked in a naval invasion, your defending units have a first-strike advantage. This means that your defending units follow all steps of the Combat Sequence alone for one round, before the attacker can fight back. Bonus defenders for castles/fortresses do not take part in this one round of free defences. Attackers casualties are immediately removed from play and do not get a chance to strike back. Combat then begins as normal.

Experienced Daimyos In Combat

A provincial force or an army led by an inexperienced (Level One) daimyo can only make one attack and cannot move at all during combat Phase C. As a daimyo's experience level increases, his army can make additional attacks and even move between battles in this phase: Any army can make a number of attacks less than or equal to its daimyo's experience level. Between attacks, the army can move into a newly-defeated or empty adjacent province to conquer it and make the next attack from there. (Otherwise, such conquering usually takes place during Phase D: Final Movement. When you conquer a province, take the matching province card from the red game board rectangle and add it to your pile.)

1. After A Successful Battle: If the experienced daimyo's army eliminated all defending units and has the capability to fight at least one more battle, it can either stay where it is and fight another battle from there; or it can move into the newly-defeated province, conquer it, and attack from there.
2. Attacking An Empty Province: If the experienced daimyo's army has attacked an empty province and has the capability to fight at least one more battle, it can move into the empty province, conquer it, and attack from there. Even though there were no defenders, this action counts as one battle, but it does not count as a successful battle for experience purposes.
3. After Calling Off A Battle: If the experienced daimyo's army calls off a battle, this "unfinished" battle still counts as one battle, but not a successful one. The army can attack elsewhere if its experience level permits.

Important clarification: Though not specifically stated, it is assumed that the army can also pick up provincial force units and split them off as a garrison during this phase. Forming a garrison would be the only reason army units could be split off. Garrisons formed during this phase could not, of course, attack, since no battle could have been declared in Phase B as these units did not technically exist at that point.

D. Final Movement

The attacking player can move any or all of his armies or provincial forces. During this phase, an army or provincial force can move only into an adjacent empty or friendly province. Remember that sea lines make provinces adjacent. Also remember that you cannot leave a province empty by moving everything out of it.

Surviving Ronin Units: Since ronin units are not removed until Action 8: Remove Ronin, the Limit of Ronin Units Per Province rule still applies. Don't violate this limit as you move your armies or provincial forces. Ronin units alone cannot garrison provinces you move out of!

Order of movement: **Move your armies first, then move your provincial forces.** **This is an important clarification:** Just as double-troop battles are fought separately, movement occurs separately. It is not possible to co-ordinate movement so that a provincial force unit moves in to fill an empty province left by a departing army; the army must leave a garrison behind since it moves first. The garrison cannot then move again, since it moved with the army; but during the next turn, the garrison is treated just like any other provincial force and may move and attack accordingly).

Armies may again move a number of adjacent provinces equal to or less than the daimyo's experience level. All a Warlord's armies move simultaneously. Armies can pick up units and split off garrisons just as they could during Phase A (and, for experienced daimyos, Phase C). Armies can now move into any adjacent empty province to conquer it. Remember to leave garrisons behind where needed.

After moving your armies, you may move your provincial forces, or any number of units from them, into adjacent friendly or empty provinces. All a Warlord's provincial forces move simultaneously. If the adjacent friendly province is occupied by an army, any or all of the provincial force units may be added to your army, as long as they fit on your army card. The units of a provincial force can split up to move into different adjacent empty or friendly provinces. If the adjacent friendly province is occupied by a provincial force, a larger provincial force results (just be sure you never have more than five regular units in a provincial force). If a provincial force unit moves into an adjacent empty province, it conquers it.

When conquering an empty province, be sure to claim the province card from the red rectangle on the game board and add it to your pile.

At the end of this phase, return your battle markers to the master tray.

ACTION 8: REMOVE ANY SURVIVING RONIN UNITS

ACTION 9: COLLECT KOKU

REPEAT ALL NINE ACTIONS UNTIL VICTORY CONDITIONS ARE MET

Alternate Rules For Eliminating An Opponent From the Game

The official rules state that if you are the player to eliminate an opponent's last daimyo, that player is out of the game, and you instantly own all of his units and provinces. You can draw upon his units when levying new troops, and can mix troops of the two colours for the remainder of the game. You also recover any daimyos you previously lost. You do not, however, recover the lost daimyos of the player you defeated: 3 daimyos is the most you can ever have. The rules go on to explain all this...

To some, this may seem like an excessive amount of advantages to confer upon a player who may have had no more part in causing an opponent's demise than to get lucky in a single battle against that opponent's last daimyo. For the most part, whoever is the first to eliminate an opponent has a tremendous (and often unearned) advantage towards winning the game. We suggest the following alternate rules for a more balanced game:

A Warlord is eliminated from the game permanently upon the loss of his last surviving daimyo. Any remaining provincial forces of the Warlord immediately revert back to being peasant farmers. The units are immediately removed from the board, and the provinces become empty provinces; they are "up for grabs".

The player eliminating the last daimyo of an opponent gets nothing special other than one less enemy to worry about. However, eliminating *any* opposing daimyo does allow a Warlord enough prestige to attract *one* new general to his cause, providing there is room available (i.e.- the Warlord must have had at least one daimyo previously eliminated from the game, since 3 daimyos is the most one Warlord may have) and the Warlord has control of his previously established *Seat Of Power*.

Seat of Power: A Warlord is *required* to establish a Seat of Power at the start of the *second* turn of the game by building a castle in any province he owns. That province forever becomes his Seat of Power. The Castle may later be upgraded to a fortress, but this is not a requirement. The Seat of Power may never be moved, though the Warlord is free to build other castles and fortresses as he sees fit. The Seat of Power may be captured like any other province. The conqueror gains no special advantages (and may not use the captured province as his own Seat of Power), and the vanquished suffers no special consequences except not being able to attract new daimyos. Seats of Power may, of course, be recaptured by their original owners and used with no ill effects.

If a Warlord who has eliminated an opponent's army has lost a daimyo himself and is in control of his Seat of Power at the end of the round, then *on his next turn* he may attract *one* new daimyo to form a new army. This is done by allocating **two koku** in the Levy Units slot (to pay for outfitting the general and his elite cavalry). Then, place a new daimyo on the army card, place the daimyo's experience marker at the lowest level of experience, and place the army marker on the board *in the Seat Of Power province*.

This new army has no units except for the daimyo, as new units cannot be levied directly to it or to the Seat of Power province until the start of the next round (the new daimyo counts as one the levied unit for the province for this round) . However, when placed on the board, the army may *immediately* add any or all of the provincial forces in the Seat Of Power province to the army card. Also, the army may pick up provincial forces to add to the army as usual on the Warlord's turn.

This immediate ability to add provincial units to the new army is necessary to prevent the new army from being completely wiped out by a ninja assassination. If you are using the promote-a-samurai option, therefore, a player would be wise to always keep a samurai stationed at the Seat of Power to add to a new army if needed.

Note: A Warlord only gets one chance to attract a new daimyo per opponent daimyo killed. If the new daimyo is eliminated, or the Warlord cannot take advantage of the opportunity to create the new army because he has lost control of his Seat of Power or already has three active daimyos, then the chance is gone forever.

This optional rule still gives players incentive for eliminating opposing armies, and still provides a mechanism to recover lost daimyos, without having the game in all likelihood end as soon as the first Warlord is eliminated. The focus of the game properly changes from simply eliminating an opponent's last daimyo to conquering and holding provinces, particularly the Seats of Power of opposing Warlords.

The downside of the rule is that it may make for a longer game. To combat this, players may by mutual agreement decide on a lesser number of provinces needed for victory conditions.

Other Alternate Rules

Check out these excellent variations:

- See Scott DiBerardino's "Strategy Cards" for this game at <http://www.javanet.com/~scottd/games/shogun.txt>.
- See Mike Montessa's "Imperial Regalia" rules at Brian Wyn's Website, <http://bvsd.k12.co.us/~wyn/ss.html>.

Ray Gruber III

<ray_gruber_iii@msn.com>

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